

# Humanizing Humanitarian Supply Chains : A Synthesis of Key Challenges

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## Abstract

Business collaboration is increasingly the focus of management scholars and practitioners alike. Collaboration brings both benefits to organizations and numerous challenges. In disaster management, the response to events that impact people, communities and businesses frequently involves the response of multiple organizations. Collaboration in this chaotic and uncertain environment is difficult. Humanitarian supply chains are part of a service-based industry, thus interactions and relationships with people are necessary, further increasing the management complexities. Managing humanitarian supply chains is a people business that still appears to be anchored in an efficiency paradigm focusing on cost reduction. This paper examines challenges and issues involved in collaboration and coordination in the context of the humanitarian supply chains through the lens of international human resource management practices. It suggests greater emphasis on developing an effectiveness paradigm that focuses on value creation, knowledge sharing and collaboration. Understanding collaboration in the complex context of humanitarian supply chains provides opportunities for application of this learning from the business world.

**Key Words :** humanitarian supply chains, disasters, relief workers, collaboration

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## **I. Introduction**

Disaster response is a complex situation requiring supply chains to provide goods and services to those affected by the impact of an event. The environment for these supply chains is complex, involving a range of organizations such as: non-government organizations (NGO); United Nations; governments (national and foreign); military; businesses; volunteer groups, individuals wanting to help as well as media.<sup>1)</sup> Collaboration is challenging in this complex environment with a large number of organizations involved.

Disasters may be sudden- or slow-onset; or even a combination of the two.<sup>2)</sup> The response to sudden-onset disasters is more commonly termed humanitarian supply chains<sup>3)</sup> (or logistics), while aid for slow-onset disasters is often called humanitarian relief chains. This paper explores the response to sudden-onset events focusing on human resource issues and the challenges in collaborating in humanitarian supply chains.

## **II. Humanitarian Supply Chains**

A disaster is identified as a “serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.”<sup>4)</sup> This may result in the loss of life, injuries, disease, psychological or well-being, and/or damage to property, disruption to community/business activities or adverse environmental changes. A disaster is classified as natural; man-made/ technological; or complex disasters (a combination of natural and man-made events such as Japan tsunami 2011). Natural disasters include sudden-onset events like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and slow-onset events like drought, erosion, or salination that affect the ability of a community to produce a livelihood. These events can be characterized by magnitude or intensity, speed of onset, duration, and area of extent. In

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1) Balcik et al.(2010) ; Kovacs & Spens(2009).

2) van Wassenhove(2006).

3) Humanitarian supply chains, humanitarian logistics and humanitarian response are used interchangeably in academic literature and practitioner reports. The term humanitarian supply chains will be used throughout this paper.

4) UNISDR(2007).

contrast, man-made events (including technological events), are the result of industrial accidents, pollution etc., as well as insurgency, war and mass migration resulting in the need for humanitarian aid. According to the International Disaster Database (IDD) there has been an increase in both the frequency and severity of both natural disasters and man-made/technological disasters.<sup>5)</sup>

## **1. Phases of Disaster Response**

Humanitarian supply chains provide the response to disasters and are defined as “the process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient, cost-effective flow and storage of goods and materials, as well as related information, from the point of origin to the point of consumption for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of vulnerable people.”<sup>6)</sup> Over time the number of organizations involved in these supply chains has increased dramatically, providing improved humanitarian response through the provision of goods and services more targeted to the needs of those affected by the event. Organizations involved include aid agencies, NGOs, governments, military, donors, suppliers, logistics service providers and the media. A critical factor in disaster management is the need to improve the human side of humanitarian supply chains i.e., human resource practices as well as improved collaboration and coordination.

One approach to improving the response to disasters is to identify different phases in supply chain delivery before and after an event. Although the phases in humanitarian supply provide a means of summarizing the response to a disaster, these vary over time and geographical space. There are a number of approaches to describing the phases of response activities for sudden-onset events.<sup>7)</sup> The majority of these models classify the response in terms of primary activities in the disaster; the model by Hughes<sup>8)</sup> for example, identifies the types of supply chain delivering goods and services for each phase, allowing activities to be linked to commonly accepted business practices and organization designs, providing a way to apply management research to the complexities of humanitarian response.

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5) EM-DATa(2012).

6) UN Logistics Cluster(2010).

7) For example Pettitt & Beresford(2005) ; (2009) ; Hughes(2008) ; Kovacs & Spens(2007) ; Safran(2003).

8) Hughes(2008).

In any one disaster operation there may be several supply chain types operating simultaneously, all of which vary significantly in terms of the number and types of participants involved. Activities tend to merge as different aspects of the aid response occur across a geographic region, where the disaster's effects may not be identical.<sup>9)</sup> Of interest is how the organizations *in situ* consider their managerial practices and approaches, particularly in terms of collaboration, learning and human resource management (HRM).

### **III. Collaboration and Coordination**

In disaster response, managing cross-boundary collaboration is difficult. Diverse organizations in the field provide numerous opportunities for confusion given their administrative burdens as well as providing assistance to the victims. Sharing information, learning and effective management across organizational boundaries by collaborating is critical to maximizing the benefits.

#### **1. Traversing Organizational Boundaries**

Organizations operating in the disaster context collaborate across a range of boundaries, and personal complexities to deliver aid.<sup>10)</sup> Similarly, in the business world organizations are challenged to enable effective collaboration across groups, teams, business units and national boundaries; differences arise from meanings, norms and personal interests. In emerging situations, such as humanitarian supply chains, boundaries and meanings may be fluid and ambiguous. Research into collaborating across boundaries of different organizational types and the nature of organizations operating in disaster response appears to have received little research. These practices occur through procedures of exchange, although the actors would have their own interpretations of the boundary objects.<sup>11)</sup>

An alternative approach to broaching boundaries has been suggested by

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9) Hughes(2008).

10) Hughes(2008).

11) Kellogg, Orlowski & Yates(2006).

Bechky<sup>12)</sup> who suggests occupational communities that interact have different perspectives, partly due to individual specializations and experiences.<sup>13)</sup> Thus, new ways of enabling collaboration across boundaries can be identified and explored. In this ‘sharing model’, transferring, translating and transforming are occurring.<sup>14)</sup> Although these approaches to accomplishing cross-boundary coordination are different, with their own assumptions of the nature of knowledge, they are not mutually exclusive. There is little known of how actors collaborate across boundaries from the knowing perspective to achieve collective learning. Better elaboration of adaptive learning and the role of emergence, plus how boundary objects can assist the process is vital. A knowing perspective would thus appear to be beneficial to continuous improvement and innovation in complex situations, such as disaster response.

## **2. Managing Practices**

In a humanitarian supply chain situation, many people involved are from different organizations and backgrounds, with different conceptualizations of disaster management work practices. Diverse backgrounds, in terms of culture, experience, expectations and expertise for example add myriad challenges. Humanitarian supply chain workers<sup>15)</sup> - employees, managers and volunteers are operating in an environment where people are suffering trauma. Additionally the relief workers face administrative burdens and role performance complexities. Balancing their roles and tasks are important parts of the response operations. Routines and objects can guide their behavior in disaster response work practices. Effective management of practices in cross-boundary collaboration is important to maximize the benefits of the response operations, with dynamic alignment amongst the organizations being important.<sup>16)</sup>

## **3. Collaborating and Relationships**

In humanitarian response, maximizing the efficient, cost-effective flow and

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12) Bechky(2003a).

13) Boland Jr & Tenkasi(1995) ; Dougherty(1992).

14) Bechky(2003b) ; Carlile(2002).

15) For the purpose of this paper the terms ‘humanitarian relief worker’ or ‘relief worker’ are used for those who respond to disasters or relief work.

16) Winter(2009).

storage of goods and materials and related information, from the point of origin to the point of consumption for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of vulnerable people,<sup>17)</sup> is an area attracting increasing interest.<sup>18)</sup> The ad hoc nature of the organizations providing aid, and the vast number present, makes it difficult to build relationships. A diversity of mandates and missions amongst these organizations increases complexity, making dynamic alignment difficult to achieve.<sup>19)</sup> Relationships are formed not only amongst aid provider organizations and the military presence but each provider is managing relationships with their own publics, their donors and the beneficiaries. NGOs are competing for donor funds, so are competing with each other. Such co-opetition is similar to the business landscape where organizations are connected to both their trading partners through collaborative ventures and business networks and their competitors. Improving relationships enables the management of this complexity and ambiguity, enabling dialogue and leading to more effective coordination of humanitarian aid and enables more learning to occur.

Relationships can be improved by a chain coordinator in international disaster situations, in a similar way to large organizations in retail chains.<sup>20)</sup> The United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OCHR) or larger NGOs for example, may assume this chain coordination role. Few organizations involved in relief operations officially have such roles nominated within their organization, although informal chain coordinators exist. Unfortunately the smaller organizations often go their own way, making it difficult for a chain coordinator to forge relationships. Moreover the opportunity to learn from each other can be missed; these links between the chain coordinators and outcomes requires further investigation.

#### **4. Managing Learning and Knowledge**

Collaborating leads to knowledge creation as part of informal relationships; the more collaborative ties an organization has, the more likely it is to create knowledge.<sup>21)</sup> Knowledge is created in the context of community that occurs

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17) Thomas & Kopczak(2006), p. 2.

18) Blecken(2010) ; Chandes & Paché(2010) ; Hughes(2008) ; Pettit & Beresford(2009) ; Sandwell(2011) ; Winter(2009).

19) McLachlin & Larson(2011) ; Winter(2009).

20) Spekman, Kamauff Jr & Myhr(1998).

21) Håkansson(1990) ; Powell, Koput & Smith-Doerr(1996).

in the organizational field of humanitarian aid, or through networks of collaborating firms, emerging from social interaction.<sup>22)</sup> Collaborations are an ongoing source of knowledge creation and an opportunity for continuous improvement and learning.

Learning from previous disaster efforts is lacking in disaster aid, though it is unsurprising considering the scale of numbers involved. For example, in 2005 over 100 agencies and NGOs were involved in the Pakistan earthquake, in addition to the 50,000 personnel from the Pakistan military.<sup>23)</sup> The effectiveness of the information system is paramount for successful humanitarian response as its knowledge appears in the capabilities that the organization possesses, which may be widely dispersed.<sup>24)</sup>

Additionally, knowledge derives from diverse social relationships,<sup>25)</sup> such as those in collaborative relationships which enable effective knowledge transfer, indicating the need for relationship management. Forming part of an organization's knowledge base, people and their embedded knowledge, skills and expertise are increasingly seen as pivotal to long-term business sustainability contributing to a knowing organization.<sup>26)</sup> These organizations are adaptable, engaging in continuous learning and innovation, providing many opportunities for knowledge creation through interactivity by bringing together diverse knowledge, expertise and activities.<sup>27)</sup>

In humanitarian supply chain work, there are high rates of turnover of personnel.<sup>28)</sup> Knowledge is cumulative and enables organizations to develop barriers to imitation and, by implication, establishes the significance of path dependency to creating an advantage from new knowledge.<sup>29)</sup> Teece<sup>30)</sup> indicates, a "firm's core business, it can be argued, stems from the underlying natural trajectory embedded in the firm's knowledge base" with a "kind of inevitability to the direction of search". The practice-based perspective sees human activity as central to knowledge; it is considered to be embedded in practice.<sup>31)</sup> Knowledge is thus socially-constructed, culturally embedded and

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22) Powell & Brantley(1992) ; Hardy, Phillips & Lawrence(2003).

23) Tatham & Spens(2011).

24) Long & Wood(1995) ; Larsen(2001) ; Schotter & Bontis(2009) ; Spender(1996) ; Tsoukas(2005).

25) Cavusgil, Calantone & Zhao(2003).

26) Adler & Kwon(2002) ; Choo(1998) ; Felin, Zenger & Tomsik(2009) ; Laycock(2005).

27) Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow(2003) ; Felin, Zenger & Tomsik(2009).

28) Tatham & Spens(2011).

29) Saviotti(1998).

30) Teece(1988), p. 264.

31) Cook & Brown(1999) ; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow(2003).

multi-dimensional.<sup>32)</sup> In this perspective, the notion that knowledge itself is an entity is challenged, with key proponents arguing that it cannot be separated from human activity,<sup>33)</sup> that it is not purely cognitive<sup>34)</sup> all work is knowledge work<sup>35)</sup> and that all knowledge is “dynamic and provisional.”<sup>36)</sup> From this perspective, knowledge is an evolving, social resource that needs to be strategically analyzed and managed.<sup>37)</sup> These strategic and management perspectives are difficult to achieve and there is no definitive best practice to maximize its benefits. With the knowledge base constantly changing, as is the case in humanitarian aid organizations, it is difficult to strategically plan and manage the disaster response processes.

A key issue is the acquisition of knowledge through practice in humanitarian supply chain work. Viewing knowing as being embedded in practice means acquiring tacit knowledge becomes critical. Although often considered unteachable, tacit knowledge “can only be produced in practice”<sup>38)</sup> thus learning-by-doing, for instance gaining experience as an apprentice, is often suggested as the way to acquire tacit knowledge.<sup>39)</sup> In organizations, knowledge bases are created from “the collective knowledge that the firm uses for its productive purposes.”<sup>40)</sup> Organizational knowledge is essentially distributed, unique and may be found in individuals, groups, or more widely dispersed.<sup>41)</sup> Senior managers who develop strategy in situations where knowledge is fundamentally dispersed cannot possibly know it all,<sup>42)</sup> leading to increasing recognition that organizations are dependent on their people to enable growth and learning through their activities and contributions.<sup>43)</sup> The next section investigates people issues in more detail, which surprisingly is only in the early emergent phase in the humanitarian supply chain literature.

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32) Berger & Luckmann(1967) ; Easterby-Smith(1997).

33) Blackler(1995) ; Gherardi(2000) ; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow(2003).

34) Orr(1990) ; Patriotta(2003).

35) Alvesson(2000) ; Alvesson & Kärreman(2001).

36) Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow(2003), p. 3.

37) Blumentritt & Johnston(1999) ; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow(2003) ; Sharkie(2003).

38) Maskell & Malmberg(1999), p. 172.

39) Gertler(2004).

40) Saviotti(1998), p. 845.

41) Becker(2001) ; Tsoukas(2005) ; El Louadi(2008) ; Felin, Zenger & Tomsik(2009).

42) Mintzberg(1990) ; Tsoukas(1996).

43) Alvesson(2000) ; Felin, Zenger & Tomsik(2009).



## **IV. Humanizing Humanitarian Supply Chain Management**

Humanitarian disaster response literature tends to place a greater emphasis on the victims and survivors with less focus on the workers. Possibly as a result of high staff turnover rates<sup>44)</sup> and increasing costs for these efforts, questions are emerging about the humanitarian relief workers, that is, the staff and volunteers from both the home country and from international aid organizations. Without them, there would be no assistance to victims and no respite from the disaster for the region. As the body of humanitarian supply chain research increases and the supply chain processes, systems and technology within the humanitarian supply chain are questioned, harnessed and improved, a possible dehumanization of humanitarian response may occur.

When referring to people in humanitarian supply chain efforts, they are not only multi-levelled but also broad in scope. On an initial examination, it appears there are two major categories; the victims and the humanitarian supply chain workers. The victims, are often injured and in need of medical attention, homeless, susceptible to disease, and in need of food and water. Some will still be trapped and requiring relief workers to place their own personal safety at risk to undertake rescues, for some, the rescue attempts will be too late, resulting in death. Some survivors become volunteer humanitarian supply chain workers, swelling the numbers providing assistance and local context to the disaster zone, which although positive, may result in increased coordination difficulties.

The following sub-sections address the people issues within humanitarian supply chain response programs by making comparisons with the challenges faced by staff within a supply chain context; adapting practices from the international human resource management (IHRM) research, and exploring the need for knowledge management strategies, each of which has had little coverage in a humanitarian disaster response context.

### **1. Humanitarian Workers in Humanitarian Supply Chain Management**

Researchers<sup>45)</sup> identify the characteristics of customers, strategic goals,

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44) Oppenheim, Richardson & Stendevad(2001).

45) Chandes & Paché(2010) ; Kovács & Spens(2011).

nature of demand and environmental factors as being sources of differentiation between business supply chains and humanitarian supply chains; adding the following “dominating characteristics”:

- unpredictability of demand, in terms of timing, location, type, and size;
- suddenly-occurring demand in very large amounts and short lead times for a wide variety of supplies;
- high stakes associated with adequate and timely delivery; and the
- lack of resources (supply, people, technology, transportation capacity, money).<sup>46)</sup>

These “dominating characteristics” have implications for those involved in humanitarian supply chains in terms of their recruitment, pre-departure training, in-country performance, and subsequent choice of remaining with the organization or adding to the high turnover of relief workers. With the number of large disasters around the world increasing from 50 to over 400 in the last 30 years,<sup>47)</sup> it is clear that gaining a greater understanding of the issues facing relief workers and preparing them for this context is necessary to reducing costs and retaining experienced staff and knowledge. People in humanitarian supply chains are more noticeable, working in the public eye in what may be traumatic circumstances.

Humanitarian workers undertake many roles including the professional specialists dealing with strategic management of the mission, operations activities such as logistics management, security management and medical treatment, through to tradespeople and technicians assisting with demolition and rebuilding. The focus of their roles varies depending on their international humanitarian organization.<sup>48)</sup> Relief workers operate in “politically, socially, and economically underprivileged locations around the world ... in remote areas... physically difficult to access or where travel is hampered by political or social turmoil”. Add to this poor levels of remuneration, the absence of a career path, health and safety concerns and the overall danger and stress inherent in a mission<sup>49)</sup> and it is understandable why retaining humanitarian relief workers is challenging.

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46) Balcik & Beamon(2008), p. 102.

47) Balcik & Beamon(2008).

48) Bollettino & Bruderlein(2008).

49) Oppenheim, Richardson & Stendevad(2001) ; Birch & Miller(2005) ; Chandes & Paché(2010) ; Sandwell(2011).

## **2. Humanitarian Supply Chain Management: International HRM in Practice**

Many humanitarian relief workers are expatriates, and differ from traditional expatriates in that their overseas assignment (or mission in this case) may be for weeks or months rather than the usual three to five year assignment of expatriate senior managers. Similar to the parent companies of expatriates, the humanitarian relief organization undertakes an ethnocentric approach to the mission by sending their people overseas, creating challenges including recruitment, staff turnover, and pre-departure preparation and training. Birch and Miller<sup>50)</sup> appear to be in the minority promoting effective HRM to ensure a successful response mission; others have more broadly stated that the management of personnel requires further attention.<sup>51)</sup> The relationship between IHRM and humanitarian supply chain management is more clearly recognized when Sparrow et al.'s<sup>52)</sup> IHRM definition is considered as:

*the possession of the skills and knowledge of formulating and implementing policies and practices that effectively integrate and cohere globally dispersed employees, while at the same time recognizing and appreciating local differences that impact the effective utilization of human resources.*

The complexity of working internationally is that managers and staff alike need to become accustomed to dealing with different cultures, economies, political systems and government practices, and in the case of humanitarian response, the unknown that comes with sudden-onset natural disasters or sudden-onset man-made disasters including terrorist attacks, chemical leaks and coup d'états.<sup>53)</sup> IHRM principles are relevant for humanitarian workers because as expatriates working internationally, they must be recruited, selected, prepared and developed, and remunerated within legal employee relations constraints. However, it is "the complexities of operating in different countries" that is the key differentiating factor between domestic and IHRM.<sup>54)</sup> Using IHRM practices for humanitarian supply chain management becomes more relevant when examining some of differences between HRM

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50) Birch & Miller(2005).

51) Overstreet et al.(2011).

52) Sparrow et al.(1994), p. 269.

53) van Wassenhove(2006).

54) Dowling et al.(2008), p. 5.

and IHRM:

- more HR activities to cover preparation for the mission and international relocation, administrative services for the expatriates, and relations with host governments and other relief organizations;
- being more involved in staff personal lives to ensure their safety and security, housing, health care, and being able to contact family members;
- a greater risk exposure for the organization in terms of higher costs due to staff turnover rates and thus less effective/successful missions, and staff working in dangerous environments; and
- more external influences from the government, economic conditions and different business practices.

In explaining these differences, Dowling *et al.*<sup>55)</sup> is almost exclusively referring to the HRM and IHRM differences in relation to the challenges facing HRM managers when planning overseas assignments for expatriate managers, who will be located in the better suburbs of the overseas cities, in safe and secure housing, in high paying positions. This is far removed from the humanitarian workers who may be living in tents close to a disaster, working hand in hand with local authorities and victims in challenging physical and social environments. Thus their working conditions may have a much closer similarity to their living conditions, than with high profile expatriates. Moreover the cultural environment impacts on how the workforce is managed, which may affect the humanitarian relief worker, suddenly thrust into a new culture and language, often with little training, working closely with survivors in trying circumstances.

### **1) Recruitment**

What is apparent is the added complexity of recruiting and selecting on an international scale. More than just the candidate's technical ability is considered due to the greater involvement by the organization in the personal life of the relief worker. Yet within the humanitarian supply chain literature the technical focus dominates, with the "expectation that staff members require standard training and must have basic technical competence to fulfill the mission"<sup>56)</sup> as well as access to information and professional networks. As with potential expatriates, selecting workers is a more complex process than

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55) Dowling *et al.* (2008).

56) Bollettino & Bruderlein (2008), p. 270.

selecting domestic employees because, in addition to predicting successful job performance, the organization is also attempting to predict the worker's ability to adjust to a different cultural environment.

Importantly a person's technical ability in the domestic business does not necessarily translate into performing well abroad. Mendenhall and Oddou<sup>57)</sup> reiterate domestic performance and overseas performance potential are dissimilar. Expatriates need to adapt to a different cultural environment; domestic ability is not necessarily a valid predictor of international success. Determining whether a potential expatriate can handle the stresses of the international mission, including the ability to remain calm during emergency is also a key factor, often tested during recruitment via psychological testing.

## **2) Staff Turnover**

A concern raised throughout the humanitarian supply chain literature is the high rate of turnover among workers, with an average mission for volunteers lasting as little as six months, staff turnover rates as high as 80 per cent and five years often the longest that humanitarian workers tend to remain with a humanitarian organization.<sup>58)</sup> These organizations are unable to maintain a full complement of staff between disasters, with many workers hired on short-term contracts, creating even greater need for induction and training programs.<sup>59)</sup> This poses many challenges in terms of the acculturation and re-learning; particularly in the sharing and transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge between relief workers who, as mentioned earlier in this paper, rely on tacit knowledge due to the experiential nature of their role.<sup>60)</sup> The management of knowledge is an issue that appears to have gained little attention within the literature<sup>61)</sup> despite the staff turnover.

A similar issue to the high turnover rates of humanitarian workers is that of expatriate failure in the IHRM literature, identified as premature return from the overseas assignment or ineffective performance resulting in objectives not being attained. Estimates of expatriate failure vary anywhere from 30-50 per cent and rising to 70 per cent failure for expatriates working in under-

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57) Mendenhall & Oddou(1985).

58) Oppenheim, Richardson & Stendevad(2001) ; Overstreet et al.(2011).

59) Bollettino & Bruderlein(2008).

60) Oppenheim, Richardson & Stendevad(2001) ; Chandes & Paché(2010).

61) Overstreet et al.(2011).

developed countries.<sup>62)</sup> Some lessons from managing expatriates to reduce turnover rates for humanitarian workers may include the importance of recruiting based on individual and situation factors in addition to technical competence; recognizing the value of previous international experience, and fully preparing the humanitarian relief workers prior to the mission.

### **3) Pre-Departure Preparation**

Due to the sudden onset of many disasters, there may be insufficient opportunity for preparing staff for the mission. Even experienced staff may be in a different region, with a new disaster or even combination of disasters, all with new and unexpected challenges. Having staff specialized across regions may be a useful strategy as some regions are more prone to particular disasters than others, for example the Asia Pacific being prone to earthquakes, typhoons and floods.<sup>63)</sup>

In the IHRM context, pre-departure training is recognized as a critical step to ensure the expatriate is effective and successful overseas as it assists the expatriate understand the cultural differences awaiting them thus minimizes the chances of culture shock. Providing pre-departure training fosters an appreciation or at least an understanding of the country and provides ideas on coping with unexpected situations; “a few firms have an intensive, month-long training session, while others hand the executive a few brochures just before boarding the plane.”<sup>64)</sup> Unfortunately, the latter extreme is more commonplace. Pre-departure programs for expatriates<sup>65)</sup> that may be relevant to humanitarian workers are:

- cultural awareness programs;
- basic language instruction;
- practical assistance in terms of how to ease into day to day life during the mission; and
- job-related factors such as medical and insurance policies, passport arrangements.

In relation to other training there is a wide acknowledgement of inadequate

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62) Hsieh, Lavoie & Samek(1999) ; Hill(2003).

63) Balcik & Beamon(2008) ; Kovács & Spens(2009).

64) Mendenhall & Oddou(1995), p. 212.

65) Hill(2003).

levels in humanitarian supply chain management<sup>66)</sup> which is unexpected given the large component of logistics activity and expense as a percentage of humanitarian aid.<sup>67)</sup> There is a reported paucity of supply chain management training from several cases, highlighting the need for developing training and education programs in this discipline.<sup>68)</sup> Calls for training are widespread within the literature,<sup>69)</sup> and this has resulted in the development of skills programs, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and executive education programs.<sup>70)</sup> Developing such programs and courses is not an easy task; delivering programs and courses in traditional classroom situations is problematic with the remote locations of disaster sites, necessitating delivery in the humanitarian workers' home country prior to departure.

## **V. Conclusion**

Managing a humanitarian supply chain crossing international borders and/or cultures is a complex management activity that is yet to embrace the necessity of business supply chain management principles,<sup>71)</sup> with only 20 per cent of humanitarian organizations measuring their logistical performance.<sup>72)</sup> As with business supply chains, developing a seamless and integrated chain is emphasized which often takes a cost-focused approach aiming to decrease costs, increase efficiencies, and optimize the supply of goods and services with research concentrating on systems, technology, and processes. Humanitarian supply chain management is often linked to sourcing and moving goods to the disaster area but is part of a service-based industry. Interactions and relationships with people are vital, increasing the management complexities.<sup>73)</sup> Yet the disaster supply chain consists of managing the movement of both equipment and human resources.<sup>74)</sup> Managing humanitarian supply chains is a people business that still appears to be anchored in an efficiency paradigm

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66) Bollettino & Bruderlein(2008) ; Balcik & Beamon(2008); Kovács & Spens(2009).

67) Blecken(2010).

68) Balcik & Beamon(2008).

69) Birch & Miller(2005) ; Oppenheim, Richardson & Stendevad(2001) ; Overstreet et al.(2011).

70) Birch & Miller(2005) ; Bollettino & Bruderlein(2008) ; Sandwell(2011).

71) Overstreet et al.(2011).

72) Blecken(2010).

73) Chandes & Paché(2010).

74) Blecken(2010).

focusing on cost reduction. This paper has argued that greater emphasis should be placed on developing an *effectiveness paradigm* focusing on value creation, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and applying IHRM principles to reduce the turnover rates of relief workers. In doing so, the paper has begun the response to Overstreet *et al.*'s<sup>75)</sup> call to “address the complex nature of recruiting, training, retaining, and deploying humanitarian” supply chain managers.\*

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75) Overstreet et al.(2011), p. 127.

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